

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9089

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

CINCEUR VAIHINGEN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 17529

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, NATO, GW

SUBJECT: BURDENSARING

REF: USNATO 5794

1. IN THE ABSENCE OF FONOFF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SIMON, EMBOFF CALLED ON PFEFFER (CHIEF, NATO DEPT.) TO FOLLOW UP AMBASSADOR FUMFELD'S BURDENSARING PROPOSAL (REFTTEL) AND LATER ON ADMIRAL STEINHAUS, THE MOD OFFICIAL CHARGED WITH PROBLEM IN THAT MINISTRY. THE FR NATO MISSION HAD SOMEWHAT DELAYED REPORTING AMBASSADOR RUMFELD'S PRESENTATION TO BONN AND FRG OFFICIALS HAD NOT HAD MUCH TIME TO CONSIDER IT. THEY MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS. BOTH NOTED THE FRG RECOGNIZED THE URGENCY OF THE TROOP DRAWDOWN PROBLEM POSED BY ENACTMENT OF
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JACKSON-NUNN, AND THE NEED FOR THE EUROPEANS

TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE ISSUE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. GIVEN THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION, THEY THOUGHT THE CONCEPTUAL APPROACH OF AMBASSADOR RUMFELD'S WAS A USEFUL STEP FORWARD AND ONE WHICH MIGHT GET OUR BURDENSARING PROPOSAL OFF DEAD CENTER. STEINHAUS AND MUEHLEN (CHIEF, FONOFF WESTERN ECONOMIC RELATIONS), WITH WHOM WE ALSO SPOKE, NOTED THAT THE \$1.6 BILLION US-FRG OFFSET FIGURE WOULD NECESSARILY BE ILLUSTRATIVE IN NATURE, GIVEN THE FACT THE OFFSET TALKS ARE NOT YET CONCLUDED. INDEED, MEUHLEN GAVE THE IMPRESSION HE WAS PESSIMISTIC, GIVEN THE FINANCE MINISTRY'S POSITION, WHETHER THE FINAL GERMAN CONTRIBUTION WOULD REACH THE \$1.6 BILLION LEVEL. STEINHAUS, WHOM WE KNOW TO BE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING US TROOPS AT THE CURRENT LEVEL HERE, TOOK THE SAME LINE. HE ALSO THOUGHT THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE UP A SHORTFALL BETWEEN THE ILLUSTRATIVE \$1.6 BILLION FIGURE AND THE CURRENT GERMAN OFFER WOULD BE A LOAN. ALL THREE STRONGLY APPROVED OF THE PROPOSAL IN THE SENSE IT BROUGHT HOME TO OTHER EUROPEANS THE FRG'S WILLINGNESS TO CARRY THE LARGER PART OF A MULTILATERAL PROGRAM WHETHER THE EXACT FIGURE WAS \$1.6 BILLION OR NOT. IT WOULD NOW BE UP TO OTHER EUROPEANS TO COME FORTH WITH THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.

2. COMMENT: DESPITE THE OSTENSIBLE INTEREST IN THE PROPOSAL, EMBOFF GAINED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GERMANS WOULD NOT BE LIKELY TO LEND VIGOROUS SUPPORT TO IT IN NATO DISCUSSIONS. A FINAL GERMAN POSITION WILL DEPEND ON THE CONCLUSION OF INTERNAL GOVERNMENT DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE EXACT LEVEL OF THE FRG CONTRIBUTION FOR OFFSET.
HILLENBRAND

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